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PP RUEHWEB

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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0000
INFO ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE
NATO EU COLLECTIVE
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHMFIUU/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5//
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP:PDUSDP/ISA:EUR/ISA:NESA/DSCA//

UNCLAS ANKARA 001323

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A
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SUBJECT: TURKEY: PARLIAMENT APPROVES EXTENSION OF TURKEY'S
UNIFIL DEPLOYMENT

REF: 06 ANKARA 5149

1. (SBU) ON MAY 29, THE TURKISH GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY APPROVED THE EXTENSION OF TURKEY'S DEPLOYMENT TO UNIFIL UNTIL AUGUST 31, 2008. THE GOVERNMENT INTRODUCED THE MOTION AT THIS TIME IN THE EXPECTATION THAT PARLIAMENT WOULD NOT BE IN SESSION FOLLOWING JULY 22 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS WHEN THE CURRENT MANDATE EXPIRES. MFA UNDERSECRETARY APAKAN, WHO HAD BEEN PRESENT FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE, TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD TO OVERCOME STRONG OPPOSITION FROM THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLES PARTY (CHP). PRIME MINISTER ERDOGAN TOLD VISITING CODELS NELSON AND WHITFIELD ON MAY 28 THAT THE GOT IS EXTENDING ITS DEPLOYMENT BECAUSE BELIEVES IT MUST CONTINUE TO SUPPORT STABILITY IN LEBANON.

2. (U) THE CHP HAD OPPOSED THE INITIAL DEPLOYMENT OF TURKISH TROOPS TO UNIFIL DURING A SIX-HOUR DEBATE ON SEPTEMBER 5, 2006 AND POLLING AT THE TIME SHOWED THE MAJORITY OF THE PUBLIC OPPOSED TURKISH PARTICIPATION IN UNIFIL (REFTEL).

3. (U) TURKEY CONTRIBUTES A CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING UNIT AS WELL AS NAVAL VESSELS TO UNIFIL, AND HAS OFFERED CONTRIBUTING NATIONS ACCESS TO SELECTED TURKISH SEA AND AIRPORTS, AS WELL AS AIRLIFT ASSETS, ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS. TURKEY HAS ALSO OFFERED TO COMMAND THE UNIFIL NAVAL COMPONENT AT THE END OF GERMANY'S ROTATION.

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WILSON